

## Pneumococcal polysaccharide 23-valent (Pneu-P-23) vaccine

### What is Pneu-P-23 vaccine?

Pneu-P-23 is a safe and effective vaccine that protects against 23 strains (types) of streptococcus pneumoniae bacteria that cause pneumococcal disease. The vaccine is approved by Health Canada.

In New Brunswick, it is provided free as part of the New Brunswick routine immunization schedule for all individuals 65 years of age and older, regardless of risk factors or previous pneumococcal vaccination and to individuals newly admitted to long-term care facilities. It is also provided to all individuals 2 years of age and older, who have not been previously immunized and who have specific health conditions that place them at greater risk of pneumococcal disease. You can ask a healthcare provider if you are eligible for the vaccine.

### What are the benefits of Pneu-P-23?

The bacteria can cause serious and life-threatening infections such as meningitis (an infection of the lining that covers the brain), septicemia (an infection of the blood), and pneumonia (an infection of the lungs).

The vaccine is the best way to protect against pneumococcal infection, a serious and sometimes fatal disease. Over 90% of pneumococcal disease is caused by these 23 strains.

When you get immunized, you help protect others as well.

### How safe is Pneu-P-23?

This vaccine is very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get pneumococcal disease, which can be very serious.

### How is Pneu-P-23 given?

The vaccine should be given by injection into the muscle of the upper arm in adults and the upper thigh or arm in children.

When an individual is eligible for both Pneu-C-13 and Pneu-P-23 vaccines, one dose of Pneu-C-13 is given first, followed by one dose of Pneu-P-23 at least eight weeks later.

### Who should receive Pneu-P-23?

- High-risk adults and children who have:
  - ✓ Immune-suppressing condition-cancers, congenital immunodeficiency; HIV; hematopoietic stem cell transplant; immunosuppressive therapy; solid organ transplant; splenic disorders- sickle-cell disease.
  - ✓ Medical conditions- chronic cerebrospinal fluid leak; chronic liver disease (including hepatitis C, chronic hepatitis B, and other diseases); chronic lung disease (including asthma for up to 18 years of age); chronic neurological conditions; chronic renal disease and dialysis; cochlear implant; diabetes and other metabolic diseases; heart disease and stroke; hemophilia, bleeding disorders (multiple blood or plasma/component transfusions); cystic fibrosis; and chronic salicylic acid therapy.
- Age 65 years or older
- Homelessness
- Alcoholism
- Residents of long-term care facilities

## Who should not receive Pneu-P-23 vaccine?

If you have a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of pneumococcal vaccine, or to any part of the vaccine or its container, you should speak with your health-care provider or Public Health nurse.

There is no need to delay getting immunized because of a cold or other mild illness. However, if you have concerns speak with your health care provider.

## What are the possible reactions after receiving the vaccine?

Reactions to the vaccine are generally mild and last one to two days. Common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, redness and swelling where the vaccine was given. Fever may also occur.

With any vaccine, there is an extremely rare possibility (less than one in a million people) of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. For this reason, it is important to remain in the clinic for 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine. Signs of this reaction may include rash, difficulty breathing or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. This reaction can be treated. Any unexpected or serious reaction to a vaccine should be reported to your health-care provider.

## What can be done for a reaction to the Pneu-P-23 vaccine?

- A cold compress at the injection site may reduce discomfort.
- For discomfort and fever, you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®).
- Ibuprofen (Advil®) may also be used; however, Ibuprofen should not be given to children under 6 months of age without first speaking to your health care provider.
- Aspirin (ASA) should **NOT** be given to children under the age of 18 years, due to its link to Reye's syndrome.

## What else you need to know.

Please inform the immunization provider of any health problems or allergies.

Your immunization provider will provide a record of the immunization. Please keep this record in a safe place and bring it when your next immunization is due.

If you have any unusual reactions to the vaccine or you have any questions or concerns, please contact your health-care provider.

## Further Information

The Pneu-P-23 vaccine is available through your health-care provider. Useful websites:

- Government of New-Brunswick <http://www.gnb.ca/health>
- Immunize Canada <https://immunize.ca/>
- Public Health Agency of Canada <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca>